**Examining Rhyme and Repetition in Poetry**

1. In pairs, read through the following lyrics of Mississippi Goddam by Nina Simone. Pay attention to **rhyme** and **repetition**.

Mississipi Goddam –Nina Simone

The name of this tune is Mississippi Goddam  
And I mean every word of it  
  
Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
  
Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
  
Can't you see it  
Can't you feel it  
It's all in the air  
I can't stand the pressure much longer  
Somebody say a prayer  
  
Alabama's gotten me so upset  
Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
  
This is a show tune  
But the show hasn't been written for it, yet  
  
Hound dogs on my trail  
School children sitting in jail  
Black cat cross my path  
I think every day's gonna be my last  
  
Lord have mercy on this land of mine  
We all gonna get it in due time  
I don't belong here  
I don't belong there  
I've even stopped believing in prayer  
  
Don't tell me  
I tell you  
Me and my people just about due  
I've been there so I know  
They keep on saying "Go slow!"

1. List the repeated words and phrases within the poem on the spaces below: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What message are you getting from this repetition? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. How is repetition helping Nina Simone communicate her message? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. What do you feel when you read the words she is repeating.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. With a partner cross out repeated sentences in *Mississippi Goddam* and read the song with this omission. Discuss how the song feels different. Is the same message communicated? Is it communicated as strongly?

**RHYME**:

1. Examine the following verse, and determine Nina Simone’s rhyming scheme. Place matching letters (A B C) beside all the words in the verse that rhyming:

Eg:

Hound dogs on my trail **A**  
School children sitting in jail **A**  
Black cat cross my path **B**  
I think every day's gonna be my last **B**  
  
Lord have mercy on this land of mine \_\_\_\_\_\_  
We all gonna get it in due time \_\_\_\_\_\_  
I don't belong here \_\_\_\_\_\_  
I don't belong there \_\_\_\_\_\_  
I've even stopped believing in prayer \_\_\_\_\_\_  
  
Don't tell me \_\_\_\_\_\_  
I tell you \_\_\_\_\_\_  
Me and my people just about due \_\_\_\_\_\_  
I've been there so I know \_\_\_\_\_\_  
They keep on saying "Go slow!" \_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Discuss how you think repetition adds or detracts from Simone’s song. You can contrast these verses to early verses where Simone is not using a rhyming scheme:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Complete lyrics to *Mississippi Goddam*

***Mississippi Goddam*** –Nina Simone

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And I mean every word of it  
  
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Tennessee made me lose my rest  
And everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
  
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Can't you see it  
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I don't belong there  
I've even stopped believing in prayer  
  
Don't tell me  
I tell you  
Me and my people just about due  
I've been there so I know  
They keep on saying "Go slow!"  
  
But that's just the trouble  
"do it slow"  
Washing the windows  
"do it slow"  
Picking the cotton  
"do it slow"  
You're just plain rotten  
"do it slow"  
You're too damn lazy  
"do it slow"  
The thinking's crazy  
"do it slow"  
Where am I going  
What am I doing  
I don't know  
I don't know  
  
Just try to do your very best  
Stand up be counted with all the rest  
For everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
  
I made you thought I was kiddin' didn't we  
  
Picket lines  
School boycotts  
They try to say it's a communist plot  
All I want is equality  
for my sister my brother my people and me  
  
Yes you lied to me all these years  
You told me to wash and clean my ears  
And talk real fine just like a lady  
And you'd stop calling me Sister Sadie  
  
Oh but this whole country is full of lies  
You're all gonna die and die like flies  
I don't trust you any more  
You keep on saying "Go slow!"  
"Go slow!"  
  
But that's just the trouble  
"do it slow"  
Desegregation  
"do it slow"  
Mass participation  
"do it slow"  
Reunification  
"do it slow"  
Do things gradually  
"do it slow"  
But bring more tragedy  
"do it slow"  
Why don't you see it  
Why don't you feel it  
I don't know  
I don't know  
  
You don't have to live next to me  
Just give me my equality  
Everybody knows about Mississippi  
Everybody knows about Alabama  
Everybody knows about Mississippi Goddam  
  
That's it for now! see ya' later